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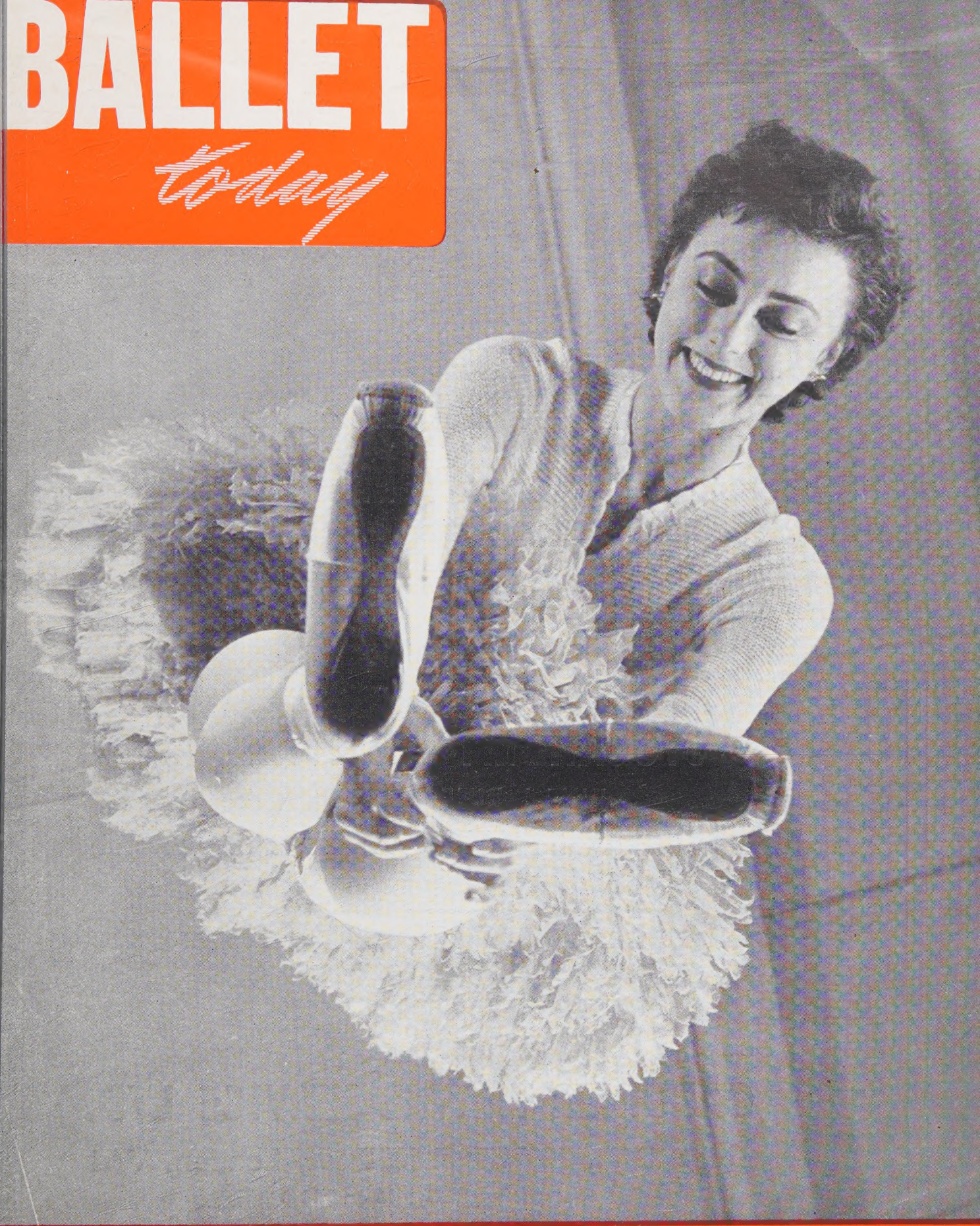

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BALLET TO-DAY

The National Dance Monthly

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Peter Craig-Raymond

Rowena Jackson who has been promoted ballerina with Sadler's Wells Ballet. Photograph: Houston Rogers.

Preview..

THE deliberate killing of the International Ballet by the Arts Council became, during February, a major conversation theme in dance circles.

Very few London dancers bemoaned the going of International Ballet it was the funeral causes which were up for autopsy. That the "IB" did good field work in the provinces is its obituary. That the work itself was often short—far short—of what one would have wished is no longer an important matter.

What is important is the way in which the Arts Council fed completely by compulsory-taxed money from the public, uses its ill-gotten funds. Three companies—the Metropolitan, St. James's and now the International have died of Arts Council neglect. At least three to six smaller ones have been ignored completely, and never has the Arts Council bothered to investigate the potential mass-public use of small groups who have appealed to it for financial help.

Naturally, after nearly fourteen years of hard work and unceasing grouping, Mona Inglesby and her husband feel embittered. How right they are.

What did these two do for Ballet?

The Arts Council And Ballet

TRAGIC

They brought a first viewing of traditional classics, revived by Nicholas Legueff. to Britain's provincial towns and cities. They took their work to huge cinemas, major-circuit cinemas and anywhere at all where a public who wanted entertainment could be found. The attacks of London critics (deserved, by metropolitan standards) affected them little. Perhaps they just thought us ignorant of the work they were doing. Perhaps we were. It is tragic that it takes an obituary to discover the virtues of the deceased.

The public which the International Ballet built up for itself—it returned frequently to every playdate—was immense.

MORE IMPORTANT THE I.B. FORCED A PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF BALLET WHICH EVERY OTHER TOURING COMPANY HAS MADE VAST USE OF—AND BALLET ITSELF THRIVED UPON IN THE PROVINCES.

Why was the International Ballet—even when past a full decade of experienced, successful, bepraised activity—denied assistance by the Arts Council?

Why is the Arts Council apparently allowed a complete free hand without any representation of the people who provide its funds and pay its huge executive and overhead expenses—the public?

If the public at large—not in London, but the real public in the whole of Britain—had been asked where the ballet-apportioned part of their taxes was to go . . . I believe the International would

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ANTONIO

BOTH Pilar Lopez and Antonio have been seen during the past few months in Madrid and London. On the basis of their programmes, which were almost unchanged between Madrid and here, an obvious trend can be made out.

This trend shows in a strong groping for new expression—for new things to say, and new ways of saying them. This, in itself, proves that Spanish dancing is not the museum exhibit some critics would make out. The contemporary Spanish dancer is young and eager in his approach. Dancers and choreographers are dissatisfied with what they are achieving. And dissatisfaction is the invariable basis of great work. It is also a proof of youth and vigour.

But these two seasons, of Lopez and Antonio, have shown where the groping is leading these dancers and choreographers. Trying to guess at the reasoning which has preceded recent new work, I would put it like this :

Classical ballet has gained a new and huge world audience. Spanish dancing is much more limited. If we tie the two together we will have the novelty appeal of being Spanish, allied to the mass appeal of being ballet !

The result : Spanish ballet.

DIRECTION

I feel that readers who have the future of Spanish dancing as an interest will agree with me if I say that this growth is not in the best direction for Spanish dance. Classical ballet technique itself is badly in need of fresh stimulus. It certainly is not the best addition that Spanish choreographers could have given their work.

When Pilar came to London she announced a true, Spanish version of Leonide Massine's **LE TRICORNE.** Right away she was in danger. She had London's memory of Massine's pseudo-Spanish choreography, and of Piccaso's tremendous decor. This was an experiment in the mixing of ballet and Spanish technique. The result—although Pilar is by far the finest Spanish dancer to have danced in **TRICORNE**—was mildly received. Why ? Simply because the emphasis which hard ballet technique gave to **TRICORNE** was missing, and the excellent Spanish work demanded a continual rethinking of what was happening from the audience.

Spanish dancing as such is not theatrical. It has taken many dancers of first rank—Argentina, Lopez, Greco, and many more—to make an effective theatrical entertainment out of a native folk art. But effective theatre has been achieved.

Now, having come this far, Spanish dancing decides to widen its scope by assimilating classical ballet technique. Right away the dancer is thrown in violent comparison with current ballet which has half a century of theatrical maturing behind it.

A few months ago Roberto Ximenez of the Lopez company choreographed a short solo for Pirmin Trecu of London's Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. This was, perhaps, the most blatant attempt at fusing ballet and Spanish dance together. It failed. The ballet dancer had not the lean, taut " snap " of the Spanish dancer. He was soft rather than brittle.

So the Spaniard, trying to use a few pieces of second-hand ballet, neither does justice to the acquisition nor performs the dance he does know to its fullest possibility.

INCOMPATIBLE

Am I saying that classical ballet and Spanish dancing are incompatible. That they should be rigidly separated. Frankly, yes. I say so firstly because of the difficulty of fusing a native folk dance with a highly sophisticated and court-originating social dance. But mainly I say it because I think such fusion is the easy way out.

I don't think Spanish dance needs an injection from the ballet. A shot in the arm, yes. But I am positive that the younger dancers coming into regular Spanish companies will be able to supply new ideas, new techniques. They will be able to do this because they themselves are new and have the greatest incentive possible : the need to prove themselves.

Lopez has an extraordinarily strong company and inside itself it can achieve much more by keeping to its origins than by a transfusion from ballet.

Antonio's new company, which has opened just this week in London, has proved just this point. On the first night it was the traditional zapateado, taranto, basque dances and fandangos which captured the audience.

That Spanish dance has made a home for itself in London was borne out by the extraordinary ovations paid Antonio. The evening before his opening at the Stoll, Margot Fonteyn and the Sadler's Wells Ballet had been " welcomed home " at Covent Garden Opera House. I thought then that the audience's response was overwhelming. But the house rose for Antonio and Flora Albaicin with such enthusiasm that the ballet's first night was forgotten. Frankly, I was surprised.

But Antonio's programme was, in fact, the finest choice I have yet seen from a Spanish group. And his own dancing has become, if anything, more electrified than in the past. His new partner, Rosita Segovia, was not so happy —but Flora Albaicin was of the real stamp of flamenco dancers. I thought her work, especially her facial expressiveness, in the seguirillas and taranto of fine quality.

Only in the first item, *Allegro de Concierto* to Granados music, did Spanish dancing's current preoccupation with classical ballet show itself. Suffice to say that this was the least popular item on the very full programme.

PROGRAMME

ALLEGRO DE CONCIERTO was Balachinesque in conception, only the castanets proving the change. Beautifully dressed, but marred by the half-assimilated ballet technique.

Ballet in Review

by PETER

CRAIG-RAYMOND

MARTINETTE introduced Antonio and an anvil hammer that even flew regular sparks. They were dimmed by Antonio. This is the first time that the Martinete, which comes from the ancient Flamenco " *Cante Grande*," has been produced as a Flamenco dance. Effective and seemingly authentic it served Antonio well.

SUITE OF BASQUE DANCES—this was Morris dancing with alure added ! A welcome variant of typical Spanish programming, these rather Dutch/Swiss looking dances are humorous, open-air examples of a lesser-known Spanish dance tradition. Excellently performed by the young, attractive company, the Arin-Arin by Antonio and his partner Rosita Segovia.

Segovia is a lovely woman, facially reminiscent of Markova, who seems to have too much of ballet's lyricism at the expense of the dash which is strong in Spanish dancing.

TARANTO introduced Flora Albaicin who made a personal triumph of the evening. An alive, strenuous dancer she is the real material of the Flamenco dancer.

HOMAGE TO DE FALLA was a rather unsure memorial to **LE TRICORNE's** composer although set by good decor and excellent lighting. Throughout the programme good decor and effective lighting helped immensly and should end, once and for all, the Spanish companies' idea that decor is a luxury. Lopez suffers badly because of her bad decoration.

ZAPATEADO ended the first part of the programme and Antonio danced it, not merely to Escudero's advice (" Dance like a man "), but like ten men possessed of ten thrumbing devils. The sustained rim-beat of the heels, softening without slowing, working up to the incredible spine-twisting turns . . . this was the Spanish dance that would win any audience.

Paco Ruiz (Antonio is a Ruiz, too) danced the traditional Farruca with less than Antonio's bravura, but with an individual (and that is more important here) and young flourish which warmed his sure, firm technical worth.

The programme was at its best perhaps, in the Seguirillas of Albaicin and Antonio. This was not the usual curtain number of the bull-ring, but a lover's meeting with all the bite temperamental love can make as outward sign of its strength. Wonderful

—and the theme of Spanish Ballet

dancing leading to a finale of excited, effective Fandangos.

The whole programme was theatrically superb and ran without a flaw and almost without a flimsy. It is not often, even in such a crowded season as this, that a critic can be fully appreciative. If I enjoyed Antonio's first night as much as the roaringly approving audience I would be less than fair not to admit it.

Admit it I do. I may feel squeamish about calling Antonio a god of the dance, but I will say that I can mention no finer Spanish dancer of our generation.

(The body of this article, that is except for the itemized reviews, was written for the B.B.C. and is reprinted by their courtesy.)

Preview—*from page* 3

not have been far behind the Wells.

SALESMAN

If this is so—what excuse has the Arts Council for fourteen years of complete and utter ignoring of ballet's greatest provincial salesman—the International ?

The Arts Council does good work in many ways—but a little mud can hide a lot of halo.

Frederick Ashton as Dr. Coppelius, Nadia Nerina as Swanhilda and David Blair as Franz in Ninette de Valois' revised Coppelia.

Nadia Nerina incites the housebreakers ! This shot shows a few of the Osbert Lancaster costumes which were, with a few reservations, excellent throughout.

The New Coppelia

NINETTE de Valois' revised production of the Ivanov-Cecchetti-Sergeyev *Coppelia* is, on the whole, a good ballet. As a popular classic this production will appeal to its audiences—it is gay, bright, colourful and generally swift.

Act 1 opens on a very one-dimensional decor by Osbert Lancaster and to a flurry of well-integrated, whilst well-varied in colouring, seeth of costumes. Few of these clash and the liberal sprinkling of whites gives a good ground for the rest.

Frederick Ashton has taken Dr. Coppelius into the background to some extent both here and in the third act when he receives the Duke's money. This is all to the benefit of Swanhilda. As Franz, David Blair hardly looks the country boy.

NO BETTER

The *corps* dancing of the mazurka and other folk-based material is no better than of old, yet not worse. This will never improve while it is taught under English Cecchetti ideas. Soft, lyrical arms are as out of place here as they are customary.

For Nadia Nerina as Swanhilda I have little but praise. I loved her young joy in being liked—and she danced to deserve it. The fear which causes her smile to disappear at times, especially when partnered, will be lost after a few performances. She is excellently suited to *Coppelia* and a few months of watchfulness will give her the assides, the extras which make Swanhilda one of the happiest roles for the young ballerina.

David Blair has developed well and has a new stature as a soloist, which—added to his considerate partnering and his ease in this—make him well worth watching.

Act 2 is a great improvement on other productions. Altogether better lit (by John Sullivan) and excellently decorated, the act hangs together better and lacks the dusty corner ideas which used to hide the dolls. The india-rubber-limbed animals swinging from the rafters are effective.

BELIEVE

In Act 3 the dusk atmosphere is well-caught and one can believe in this wedding revelry. Swanhilda's costume is superb here and the finale excellent. The Aurora of Anya Linden and Prayer of Julia Farron fit in well but the *corps* work again lacks pace. The final pas de deux for Nerina

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Discs

HOMAGE to the Queen (Arnold). Philharmonia Orch. (Irving). HMV. CLP. 1011.

Surely this is a record every ballet-goer will want of Ashton's tribute to our young Queen. The composer has given us something delightfully lyrical and as was fitting, kept discord well harnessed even in the music for "Fire." With the fine orchestral playing, technicians and all concerned may be congratulated.

Poeme (Chausson). *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso* (Saint-Saens). Francescatti (violin) Philadelphia Orch. (Ormandy). Columbia 33C1029.

This *Jardin aux Lilacs* follows the recent Decca issue with the violinist, Ferras ; but as good as he was, Francescatti's interpretation here is definitely superior. It has more light and shadow and colour—the tempo quickens and slackens freely but without any loss of the nostalgic atmosphere so essential to this work. To Saint-Saens' Rondo, which is splendidly played, Nijinska created a classical pas de deux for Hightower and Skibine. Recording and surface excellent.

Symphony No. 7 (Beethoven). New York P.-S.O. (Walter). Columbia 33CX1120.

Massine's *The Seventh Symphony* was yet another hit at the diehards—Beethoven of all the composers! Though an excellent ballet—briefly, God's creation and punishment of the world—it must be admitted that the score did not fit so well as in the case of the Brahms' and Tchaikovsky's symphonic ballets. But the costumes and décor, and Markova's heavenly dancing with Youskevitch made ample amends. Bruno Walter's rendering is not exactly "great" but it is sound and workmanlike and has been recorded satisfactorily.

Alice in Wonderland (Horovitz). Concert Orch. (Goodwin). Parlophone R3790.

It is generally conceded that the Flower and Dragonfly waltz, and the Lobster Quadrille are the best episodes in Charnley's ballet and Horovitz has served him well, particularly with the amusing score for the Quadrille. The music is light but tuneful and danceable, and comes as a relief after so much ballet music that is neither. If you can be light-hearted, you will enjoy this SP.

Les Preludes (Liszt). *Caprice Italien* (Tchaikovsky). Philharmonia Orch. (Galliera). Columbia 33SX1013.

I reviewed Telefunken's recording of Liszt's music—Fokine's ballet for Pavlova—in the February issue. I find the present Columbia disc definitely more pleasing. Galliera's phrasing is good, the fortissimos have breadth and grandeur, the recording is smooth, even the brass and being a 12 *in.* disc there is no break. It costs you an additional five shillings but that is more than offset by a good Caprice Italein.

The Four Temperaments (Hindemith). Victor Aller (piano), Concert Arts Orch. (Slatkin). Capitol CCL 7521.

Hindemith wrote this for ballet but it was not until 1946 that Balanchine choreographed it for The Ballet Society of America, now the New York City Ballet. How cleverly the composer draws the characteristics of human nature and with such economy! The conductor, orchestra and pianist all have the feeling of the work, giving a fine performance. The quality of the recording is excellent, full and round. Surface completely silent.

Dante Sonata, Polonaise No. 2 *and Consolations* 1 *to* 6 (Liszt). Peter Katin (piano). Decca LXT 2877.

There was no orchestra for the premiere of Ashton's *Dante*

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Books

A HISTORY of Russian Ballet. By Serge Lifar. Translated by Arnold Haskell. (Hutchinson, 21s.)

"At the right time and on the proper day, that is on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons, to give instructions to the young people under his charge : to teach them with honesty, sincerity, seriousness, and all the qualities of a good man." These simple precepts given to Jean-Baptiste Landé, ballet master from France, in 1731 were, in a way, the beginning of the Russian Imperial Ballet. Later, Landé and his military cadet pupils put on a lavish show, and this so delighted the Empress Ann that he had no difficulty in obtaining her permission to found a dancing academy. The students were twelve boys and twelve girls, chosen by the Empress from the children of palace servants.

It is fascinating to trace the growth of Russian ballet from this modest origin to its nineteenth century spleandour, through the Diaghilev period to the present day, in this absorbing book by Serge Lifar, premier danseur, choreographer, and scholar, and the pages are enriched and enlivened by extracts from contemporary accounts. The description of the wonderful period under Didelot, favourite pupil of Vestris and one of the great ballet masters, is exciting.

An amusing picture of Didelot at work adds another to the long list of choleric ballet masters. Not content with beating any unfortunate dancer who had incurred his wrath, Didelot would stand in the wings during a performance. When, "under a burst of applause the dancer would withdraw into the wings, Didelot was watching for her there and grabbed her by the shoulders, shook her like a plum tree, showered her with insults and with a thump on the back shoved her on the stage to take another bow.

Often he could be seen running in the wings after some victim who thought to escape him. When he was in a real temper it took a shower of water to bring him back to his senses."

Though the nineteenth century enthralls because of the great developments of ballet in that period and the starry constellations of glittering names that accompanied it ; the chapters covering the present century have a special interest because of Lifar's position as *premier danseur* and choreographer in the Ballets Russes ; and for the extracts from previously unpublished letters written by Diaghilev to the author.

"Just back from the theatre," one letter begins, "with a terrible headache brought on by what I have seen and particularly by Strawinsky" and "But first of all about Ida (Rubenstein). The house was packed, but a good many of the audience had been given free tickets by the management. But none of us were given free seats, neither myself, Boris, Nouvel, Sert, or Picasso, and we only got in with very great difficulty. All our people were there, Misia, Juliette, Beaumont, Poignac, Igor (Strawinsky), etc. . . . The evening was as dull as any provincial show. Everything went on too long. even the Ravel, and that only lasts fourteen minutes. But the worst of all was Ida.

Strangely enough she was dressed the worst, and when she appeared with Wilzak, *nobody*, not even I, could recognise her. She was bent, her red hair dishevelled, wearing ballet shoes (everybody else wore helmets, feathers and heels)—this to make her less tall. Nobody clapped when she came on stage. Her dancing was quite impossible . . . Later, Strawinsky

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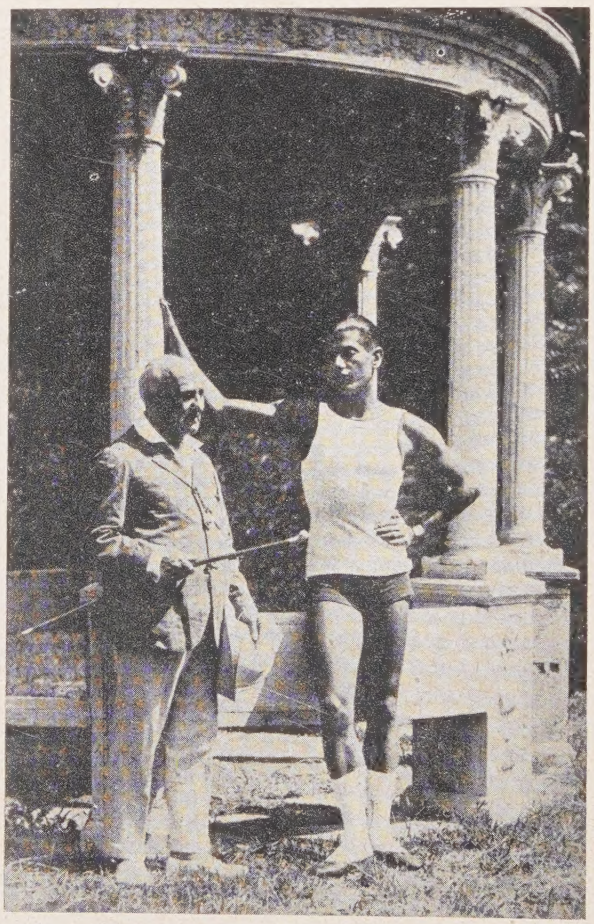

From Lifar's History of Russian Ballet—with Cecchetti.

MODERN CHARACTER DANCING

KLARI SZECHY comes from Budapest where she was a pupil of the great dance teacher Ferenc Nadassy. (See BALLET TODAY, *December issue). She is now settled here and has recently started her own classes in London although she has obtained practical theatre experience here by working in summer shows and on TV. A feeling of dissatistaction at the " character " dances in our ballets and the news of Miss Szechy's work led to her giving a lecture-demonstration to the London Ballet Circle on February 21st.*

MISS Szechy's talk was one of the best that have been heard at functions of this kind. Her material was well presented, easy to follow and yet almost entirely unfamiliar to the audience. She included no less than 16 dance sequences to illustrate her subject and was supported by three of her students, Helen-Mary Keay, Jacqueline Livingstone and Andra McLaughlin, the latter being well-known as " Sinbad " in the recent Ice Show at Empress Hall. Her choice of dancers proved just how well English and Americans could respond to the rhythm and style of Hungarian dancing.

FORTUNATE

Miss Szechy told her audience that she considered herself very fortunate to have studied with such a great teacher as Nadassy, who, incidentally, is still working at the Opera House in Budapest.

Miss Szechy stated that before Nadassy there was great, but undeveloped talent in Hungary for operatic character dancing. On Nadassy's being appointed to the Opera House in Budapest the existing methods were readily adapted to his principles of teaching. Miss Szechy compared the pre-Nadassy outlook in Hungary to that existing here today. Namely, that nobody likes character dancing or wants to develop it ; consequently it is sadly neglected. She feels, from the results in Hungary now, that the training of this form of dancing should be parallel with the training of classical ballet. It is as important a part of stage technique as pointe work to the ballerina.

In order to make sure that everyone understood her perfectly, Klari Szechy paused in her opinion of the defects of character work today to define " operatic character dancing." She felt that this meant " a stylised form of folk dancing." This form was enhanced by the uses and developments of folk music instigated by the great composers Tchaikowski, Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov, Glazunov . . . and countless others who raised it to such a high level.

THE KLARI SZECHY TALK

★

For all its stylisation, Miss Szechy feels that these dances should not lose their zest and the " inner spirit " that belong to folk dancing.

SHOULD BE

Sitting once with Klari in a theatre, watching some " character " dances in a French ballet, she exclaimed at the conclusion, " Now the audience should be applauding as much as they do for the classical work ! " But they were not. They were polite, uninterested because the dancers had performed in a humble manner as if ashamed and glad to reach the end.

A fear that deters some people from studying character dancing —namely, that certain leg muscles become over-developed, Miss Szechy dismissed as quite false : if you are well-trained. And that, of course, applies to every form of physical culture. She remarked that Nora Kovach, who is her colleague and country-woman and who danced here with Istvan Rabovsky last summer, had studied character dancing for 14 years and had beautifully proportioned, slim legs.

In Russia today, six character lessons are included in one week's schedule of work. Another misapprehension—that there was no lyricism in this dancing, was disproved in the demonstrations. Miss Szechy made an interesting comment here that she found it more difficult than any other aspect of her work, to teach the lyricism of character to trained classical dancers. She did not deny that character was even more necessary to a finer degree in male dancers than girls.

WAITING

In England the dancers have the talent, but—undeveloped, waiting for sufficiently interested teachers and choreographers to lead the way. She longed for the day when character dances could be as much a highlight of the evening's dancing as other forms and it is Miss Szechy's aim to widen this interest, especially amongst ballet dancers.

Andra McLauchlin

THE DANCERS

The dancers must be commended for the tremendous impression and added life that they gave to Miss Szechy's already lucid explanation. Helen-Mary Keay is a teacher of dancing and studies many forms of it.

She it was who demonstrated the slow palotas and made the audience appreciate the beauty of the arms, which apparently date to the Turkish invasion of Hungary.

Jacqueline Livingstone, a most accomplished dancer of quite different qualities, showed a fiery precision and attack which worked like an electric shock through the audience. Her adaptability was seen in a slow csardas, which was very beautiful. The effect of these dancers was all the more marked, as they were performing on the same floor level as the audience and danced in practice dress.

Lastly, Andra McLaughlin, who has been a professional skater for two years and had only taken one month's lessons with Miss Szechy ; her progress has been phenominal and the passionate interest in her work made her dancing alive and thoroughly worthwhile. With courage and skill she performed a male dance from *Casse Noisette* as well as the ensemble dances.

In concluding, praise must be handed to Miss Szechy for her sincerity in arranging an excellent afternoon's entertainment, combined with instruction.

Ballet companies would do well to ask Miss Szechy to repeat her demonstration, but in actual production.

Susan Lester.

● IN WRITING OF DANCE BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN IT MUST BE REMEMBERED THAT A BASIC "URGE", IS FORCED ON THE CREATORS TO PORTRAY COMMUNIST IDEALOGY. WE REPORT THIS ACTIVITY WHILST DISAGREEING WITH NATIONALIST COERCION UPON THE BALLET.

CZECHOSLOVAKIAN BALLET TO-DAY

IN Czechoslovakia today ballet and folk dance are being merged in an effort to enrich the repertoire of ballet in a way which will have meaning for present day audiences.

The fairies, the princes, the witches of old fairy tales no longer serve—they are being replaced by a ballet world of "people s heroes and heroines." Characters which serve to tell the history of the country—the story of peasants who took up guerilla fighting to escape the tyranny of feudal lords—the story of the farm hand, the factory worker, striving to build a future and country fit for their children.

Turning outside of pure ballet for melodies and steps with which to tell such stories, much material has been found among the folk dances, Czech, Moravian, Slovak and Silesian which can be adapted for ballet.

In the last century national songs and dances have played an important role in Czechoslovakia's culture. They pervaded even the cosmopolitan style of ballroom dancing of the parlors and ballrooms. At the turn of the century Leos Janacek, in his ballet *Rakos Rakoczy*, used Moravian songs and dances.

THE LEAD

Choreographers of today are following his lead and, breaking away from the conventional dnce patterns and movements, are seeking inspiration among the original forms of folk dances.

There is, for example, *Ondras*. This ballet by the young Czech composer Ilja Hurnik is the story of a Silesian outlaw of the beginning of the 18th century. The music for this is based on folk melodies, and wide use is made of folk dance patterns.

A ballet depicting the conflict between the rulers and the people turned to Slovak national dances for much of its inspiration. This is *Janosik*, by Vaclav Kaslik.

Then of course, there is Vostrak's *Philosophical History*. The story, this, of the students who took part in the Prague uprising of 1848.

Next season two ballets are scheduled to open which make strong use of national themes and dances. The first *Eufrosina* by J. F. Fisher. The other, *Svanda the Bagpiper*, an evening-long piece which uses a wide variety of national folk dances from Czechoslovakia and other countries.

THE MEDIUM

Gradually, choreographers and composers are striving towards a new dance medium which will tell the contemporary storyof Czechoslovakia. They believe that it is only with a complete knowledge of folk art and the common people that they will be able to create a truly "national ballet" for their country. With this in mind particular attention is paid in State dance schools to the study of dances from all regions of the Republic.

Slowly, experimentally, ballet and the folk dance are being merged in the hope of producing a national ballet, which will embrace the widely varied forms of folk dance and ballet which form the lives of the Czechoslovak people at the moment, in a form with which to build a complete picture of contemporary Czechoslovakia.

Maria Tallchief

BALANCHINE'S "NUTCRACKER"

ON February 2, the long awaited Nutcracker arrived; Balanchine has completely restaged the Tchaikovski ballet and restored all the cuts that have been made in previous versions

Balanchine's restaging of the *Nutcracker* accepts the Petipa detailed scenario. The changes exist primarily in new transformation scenes and new choreography. Balanchine has built his ballet on the premise that this, perhaps, above all others, is a fairy-tale for children and for the child in heart. It is, therefore, only logical that the children, Clara and Herr Drosselmeyer's Nephew (The Nutcracker), should be protagonists of the ballet, and that much of the ballet itself should be presented as seen through their eyes, peopled by their playmates as well as the enchanted toys. In accordance with this concept, much of the stage belongs to the children. Perhaps, this is a mistake.

SCENES

Little dancing occurs in Scene I, with the exception of a short, interesting variation

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PORTRAIT BY

June Ryan

text

by

RICHARD AUSTIN

MARKOVA

ALICA Markova is liable to cause a battle royal among the ballet-omanes whenever she appears. A highly individual performer she has set her own standards which do not conform to the accepted canon ; she is the beautiful heretic of the modern dance.

One school of thought maintains that she is a grossly unclassical dancer, with a flawed line, highly mannered in technique and presentation, with only a limited dramatic range ; the other that she is the greatest living ballerina, a sublime version of moonshine and magic, the complete evocation of Maria Taglioni.

Markova's style is mannered indeed, for the purist full of imperfections, but with her as it must have been with Pavlova these limitations have been transcended so that they have become an integral part of her personal style. One remembers her best as the intangeable wraith drifting through the enchanted forests of Giselle *and* Les Sylphides*—a shimmering version enmeshed in moonlight, a pale ghost haunting the ruined churches and darkened woods of the Romantic era.*

As a personality she is cold and withdrawn ; she does not move with Fonteyn's tenderness nor Chauvire's perfect style and lyricism.

Her dancing is exquisite—incredibly fragile, delicate and precise, full of moments of wonderful repose—yet it is not completely satisfying because of these limitations in warmth and dramatic intensity.

A little apart from the great classical tradition of Trefilova, Spessiva and Fonteyn, she has none the less added her own individual chapter to the history of modern ballet. She has enriched the classical dance by her very refusal to conform to its rigid perfections ; the heretic may not have formed a new school, but she has shown us the infinite varieties that can exist together within a single style.

PARIS

—FERDINAND REYNA

★ Following the Marquis de Cuevas Ballet at the Theatre Empire, Antonio and his Spanish Ballet gave a series of very good performances which pleased the Paris public. Aiming to raise the "artistic" standard of his presentation, Antonio's choreography was indeed diverting with its period costumes, to the classical music of Father Soler—the monk—composer, of the 17th century. The choreography in itself was weak, it is difficult these days to accept "points" etc., intermingled with noisy "castanets" and "finger-snapping". It is true that in the past, classical dancing existed in Spain, and purely for this reason the choreography seemed to reveal an authentic reconstruction of the past.

★ It was interesting to note the Flora Albaicin, and Rosita Segovia, were a "revelation" in the flamenco—the latter was formerly the "premiere danseuse" at the Liceo, Barcelona. The whole company consisting of 28, showed marked discipline, and were well conducted. The costumes were attractive.

★ Jean Paul Andreani, who was recently promoted to "star dancer" at the Opera, made his debut in *Le Spectre de la Rose*. In spite of his "lightness", fine poise, and extraordinary "technique", the public were disappointed in him. To execute a high-jump is not sufficient, one must have "style" and a full understanding of a role.

★ Yvette Chauvire has returned to the Opera, in the *Lac des Cygnes*. She is still the great dancer that we love so much—with her many varied expressions, and the full interpretation of her dancing—there is that certain feeling of "loneliness and sadness" that is not devoid of a charm that is nobly portrayed, as she alone is capable of expressing.

This time, the critics have not been lenient, the *corps de ballet* have endured hard criticism, as also the general stage settings.

★ All is now arranged between the French and Soviet Governments. In April, the Comedie Francaise, will visit Moscow where they will present *Tartuffe*, by Moliere, the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, and perhaps a work by Beaumarchais. In May, the Leningrad Ballet will come to Paris, presenting two of Prokofiev's works—*Cinderella* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

NEW YORK

—HOPE SHERIDAN

★ The first new work of the season, offered on January 19th, was Balanchine's *Opus 34* to Arnold Schonberg's Accompaniment-music for a motion picture" which was composed in 1930 (Opus 34).

★ The curtain rises on a stage bare of decor and peopled by two couples backed by a corps of nine girls. All are clad alike in plain white leotards and tights. So alike is the costuming that the men are only faintly distinguishable from the women! The choreography consists of a series of mass movements employing the classic vocabulary. However, much of the movement could be said to stem from the "modern" school insomuch as it employs the deliberate use of imbalance and angular, compulsive gestures, done not in allegro but rather in legato (*i.e.*, the sudden turning up of a foot at the end of a classical extension, then the deliberate turning in of the lower leg at the knee joint to form a minor angle thus presenting the leg in a most ugly position). Diana Adams and Nicholas Magallanes, Patricia Wilde and Francisco Moncion form the two couples.

★ The second part, entitled, Second Time, introduces two stretchers upon which there are two bodies. These are wheeled in accompanied by several figures dressed in strict hospital operating room garb, no doubt representing the popular conception of an emergency surgeon. The surgeons converge upon the two stretcher-tables which lie head to head. Surgery is begun. Here the ballet takes on all the elements of the broadest burlesque.

★ Oddly enough, the latter sections of this ballet, contain a strange sort of compelling intensity and dignity, reminiscent of a *Bal des Pendus*. The exit of the female figure at the end of the ballet is almost heroic in the Greek sense of the word.

★ *Opus* 34 is at one and the same time unsuccessful, laughable, disturbing and compelling. Tanaquil LeClercq and Herbert Bliss dance the female and male figures. They are supported by six girls and ten boys in various guises.

MADRID

—HERMA DIAS

★ It is deplorable that there is no national ballet in Spain—a country so rich in artistic resources, that could supply material for the most extravagant choreography, decor and music (for there is no lack of painters and musicians) as well as an audience ready and eager to support regular performances. It can safely be estimated that the Spanish public see, on an average two ballet companies each year who give performances of a fortnight's duration in each of the leading cities.

★ Obviously the first step towards a national ballet must be the formation of a national ballet school situated in the capital—Madrid, for the benefit of ballet dancers all over Spain who would be potential members of such a company.

★ True there are three recognised ballet schools in Madrid, but the pupils in most cases being drawn from the "moneyed" classes consider it "infra dig" to become professional dancers, so after an arduous training, and on attaining the age of eighteen or nineteen they immediately enter "Society" and regard their ballet dancing as a thing of the past, having wasted time and money in gaining some proficiency in a most difficult art which they had no intention of pursuing. This is, not of course applicable to every student of ballet but unhappily to a large number.

★ Perhaps it is because Spain has been somewhat isolated from the rest of Europe for some time that there is a lack of a regular ballet theatre, but now that she is beginning to realise her artistic potentialities it rests with the leaders in the ballet world to unite and start a company which would form the nucleus of a national ballet and become proficient enough to visit other European capitals.

The Eagle of the Dance—

ESCUDERO

—in the next issue

MONTE CARLO

—C. DE RHYNAL

★ The great attraction of Festival Ballet at Monte Carlo was the performance of *Gisele* with the Yvette Chauvire and Anton Dolin.

★ The reason of this success is due to the splendid qualities of "mime" of both protagonists added to the virtuosity of the dancing, especially in the second act when Yvette Chauvire could show all her skill in the variations and the pas de deux. Anton Dolin, in the part of Alvert, was a perfect partner and gave the impression that his technique and clever dancing were as high as ever.

★ Another fine show was *The Spectre de la Rose* in which John Gilpin gave a wonderful demonstration of his *elevation* and his mastery in *batteries*. The part of the young maid was taken by Moira Shearer who received an enthusiastic reception.

★ In the same programme there was *Les Sylphides* with Daphne Dale, Noel Rossana Marylin Burr and Oleg Briansky. Once again the *corps de ballet* showed their perfect synchronism of rhthm whilst the soloists gave a fine rendering of dancing.

★ For the final show the Company gave *Concerto* with Marylin Burr and Louis Godfrey. The famous *Pas de Quatre* was danced by Belinda Wright (who danced too with Gilpin in *Spectre*) Anita Landa, Noel Rossana and Daphne Dale.

★ The Grand Pas de Deux of *Le Cygne Noir* was danced by Nathalie Krassovska-Leslie and John Gilpin.

★ It must be mentioned that a Gala performance was given by the London Festival Ballet for the funds of *La legion d'Honneur* and H.H. The Prince of Monaco and his family were present and gave the signal of applauses at the end of each ballet.

★ Undoubtedly the Festival Company had a real triumph during their too short season. It is expected to see them again in the Principality for a longer period.

WHO'S WHO IN BALLET—A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF LEADING DANCERS, by Edith Barking

In Ballet today

PART TWO

D

Daphne Dale. Born in British East Africa (Nairobi) in 1932, Dale trained there originally before coming to London in 1949. Here she joined the Dolin-Markova company and transferred to Festival Ballet when that company was formed. She has one principle role, that of Vilia in Ruth Page's ballet of that title.

Margaret Dale. Trained in the north of England and at Sadler's Wells school before joining Sadler's Wells Ballet in 1938. Her roles include the Bluebird and Cat in *Sleeping Beauty*, Attendant Spirit in *Comus* and the Bride in *Wedding Bouquet*. She first appeared at the Wells in *Le Roi Nu* and has danced in *Les Rendezvous*, *Casse*, *Lac*, etc. She also created a role for Petit in *Ballabile*. Recently Dale has specialized in video choreography.

Alexandra Danilova. Born in Russia and a graduate of the Imperial School, Danilova danced for Diaghilev in 1919 after working at the Maryinski Theatre. She exited the Soviet Union in 1924 and never returned. With Diaghilev she became ballerina in 1927. She has worked with de Basil, Balanchine, Monte Carlo, Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and in several musicals. Now in an advisory post with an American school, she lectures and makes occasional appearances such as her recent Japanese tour.

Lycette Darsonval, born in France (Coutances), studied at, and later joined, the Paris Opera Ballet where she has danced in a large repertoire and created a number of roles for Lifar and other choreographers.

Gisela Deege. At nineteen, Deege—a pupil of Tatiana Gsovsky—is one of Germany's better-known dancers. She has created roles in various Gsovsky ballets such as *Apollon Musagete* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Last year she debued at the Berlin Opera after nearly three years at Hamburg. She danced Ophelia in *Hamlet* for Berlin,

Agnes de Mille. After long training, appeared with Rambert, Ballet Theatre and in individual ballets. She has choreographed mainly in American idiom, which she made her trade mark, *Fall River Legend*, *Rodeo* and many others, including the dancing for such musicals as *Oklahoma*, *Carousel*, *Brigadoon*, *Allegro*, *Paint Your Wagon*, etc.

Anton Dolin. Born in 1904 in Sussex, his Irish parents tried to disuade him from ballet—and from his change of name, originally Sydney Healey-Kay. Studied, after local tuition, with Astafieva and joined Diaghilev in 1921 and became soloist three years later. With Diaghilev he danced in *Le Train Bleu* by Nijinska which was especially commissioned for him.

1925 left Diaghilev to appear in revue.

1927 at head of Nemchinova-Dolin Ballet.

1929 rejoined Diaghilev for last tour of the company.

During next few years alternated guest appearances at Sadler's Wells, Old Vic and

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Gisela DEEGE

Leningrad School of Ballet

BY

NIKOLAI VOLKOV

Pupils in Casse Noisette

THE Leningrad School of Ballet has a long and impressive history.

In 1738 a court dancing school was opened in St. Petersburg in a magnificent old building. There, children of court attendants were taught "theatrical dancing of various types" for the entertainment of illustrious personages. That small dancing class, which survived all of Russia's emperors and empresses, has emerged in Soviet years as a school of ballet of the highest rank. In 1938 the Leningrad School of Ballet celebrated its 200th anniversary.

In its lifetime this school has trained many generations of fine ballet dancers, men and women who have brought world fame to the Russian ballet.

The methods of instruction at the school, the scientifically developed study programme in classical, character and folk dancing, and the classes studying lifts and acting, not only preserve and continue the age-old traditions of Russian ballet but are developing them in the training of young ballet dancers and ballet masters.

The term of study at the school is ten years. Besides receiving all-round specialised instruction in dancing, the pupils are given a general secondary school education. In addition they have courses in social sciences, aesthetics, the history of dancing, the theatre and the fine arts, and literature, and learn to play a musical instrument.

REALIST

Soviet ballet is distinguished for its profoundly realist foundations. Every dance contains emotion and meaning. To convey to the audience the content of the dance the pupil must learn the art of acting, must possess the ability to bring out the innermost emotions of the character portrayed. And, of course, the pupil graduating from the school must have mastered technique in classical dancing.

As at other Soviet schools of ballet, the Leningrad school arranges its teaching in such a way that its pupils have an opportunity to work on the great ballet roles and learn how to interpret them.

The biographies of many outstanding Soviet ballet dancers begin with the day when as small children they first crossed the threshold of the Leningrad School of Ballet, to emerge ten years later the proud possessors of secondary school diplomas.

The outstanding ballet dancers of the Leningrad School always recall their teachers with gratitude. For many years the most famous teacher at the school was Agrippina Vaganova (she died in the autumn of 1951) who helped to train a galaxy of ballerinas. Classical male dancers gratefully remember their teacher Vladimir Ponomarev, who also died not long ago. The methods used by these two teachers are carefully treasured and developed at the school.

Two senior pupils

The brilliant gifts of Marina Semenova were first revealed to the public in the spring of 1925 when her dancing at the school's graduation evening was given great applause by the audience. Three years later another brilliant and inspired dancer, Galina Ulanova, graduated from the school. And within three years yet another of its graduates, Natalia Dudinskaya, had rightfully taken her place as a premier dancer of the Leningrad ballet.

EMERGED

In the following ten years the classical dancers Olga Iordan, Tatyana Vecheslova, Feya Balabina, Alla Shelest and Galina Kirilova emerged to shine in the world of ballet. In recent years another group of brilliant dancers have appeared on the Leningrad stage: Ninel Petrova, Nonna Yastrebova, Inna Israileva, Olga Moiseyeva, Ninel Kurgapkina, Lyubov Voishnis and Alla Osipenko—all graduates of the school.

The school also has to its credit the training of a fine group of male classical dancers. There are the polished dancers B. Shavrov and P. Gusev, the spirited Alexei Yermolaev and Vakhtang Chabukiani, the lyrical Konstantin Sergeyev and his fellow pupil Semyon Kaplan. Of the gifted new male dancers that have come to the fore there are I. Belsky, K. Shatilov, A. Makarov, B. Bregvadze and S. Kuznetsov, to name just a few.

At the Bucharest Fourth World Youth Festival in 1953 first prizes for classical pas de deux went to Inna Izraileva and Svyatoslav Kuznetsov, and to Ninel Kurgapkina and her partner from the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre

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● ULANOVA

SOVIET CHOREOGRAPHY

THAT a ballerina thinks sufficiently of her art to write uncompromisingly of its problems is so surprising to Western critics that we hardly need read her words before applauding her.

In England, and in the United States, it is enough to dance—and gossip. In Soviet Russia, to judge by what little escapes outside, the gossip is as dead as last year's five year plan. The dancer dances, looks around her and sets about rethinking, reshaping—and putting her conclusions into print.

At the most, our ballerinas can write a foreword prating sweetly of how nice it is that people write books on the ballet.

In a booklet just published by the SCR (at 2s. 6d.) prima ballerina absoluta, Galina Ulanova, writes three articles and a short introduction, artistic director Igor Moiseyev writes on ballet's contact with reality and Bolshoi choreographer Rostislav Zakharov writes on the dramaturgy of ballet.

In the March issue, BALLET TODAY voiced an interest in the literary ballet (missing because so much of ballet is illiterate and, in a full sense, uncultured) and life compatability has been on our tongue-tip for years.

WORKER

What does the booklet do? Most important, it proves that Ulanova is not only the ballerina we know her to be from our too-limited experience, but also a fully cultured, intelligent and deeply, constructively thinking dance worker. It is interesting to notice the difference even with Ulanova of writing for the Soviet reader and the Western reader. Those phrases about truth and revolution are only found in her export writing. When she is writing only with ballet as target, her work is of excellent use. It is a pity the British publishers of Soviet works cannot forget political propagandeze which is so blatant in such cases as this. Ulanova needs no party line to make her acceptable—we can think with her although loathing the political system under which she works. But it is unfortunate that the publishers need remind us of that system to no good effect.

Soviet terminology of criticism has to be taken with a pinch of dialecticism. Such descriptives as "crude naturalism" and "aesthetic formalism" have undertones of inbred politic which separates them from any similar phrases used by Western critics. Both come from *Pravda*.

But, in case Western propaganda (in its turn) has misled you into thinking that Soviet Russia is a one-opinion nation in which established order is not criticized, the writing of Moiseyev will surprise you.

Stagnation, conservatism, far removed from life, failure, ignorance, unpreparedness . . . these are all taken from a few pages of Moiseyev's writing on ballet and reality. And it is precisely our discovery of these honest, attacking words which promotes our belief in the sincerity of the opinions that follow.

Moiseyev's principal target seems to be the conservatism of the Bolshoi and its constant attempt to visualize contemporary life inside the bounds of dated technique and canons. "Real life knowledge" is demanded by this writer who condemns as hopelessly inadequate the Chinese coolie dances in *The Red Poppy* as one example.

Galina Ulanova takes up much the same theme. Condemning the futile timidity of the Bolshoi directors, she urges them to "seek, strive, dare to experiment".

IGNORANCE

But in trying to rethink the whole shaping of choreography, Ulanova reveals her almost total ignorance (shared, apparently, by Soviet ballet in general) of Western ballet since 1910! This incredible forty year gap in Russia's ballet knowledge is explicable—it is the Fokine/-Diaghilev revolt which passed the Russians by.

The proof? "It should be possible for the choreographer to urge (his) conceptions on the (other) creators of the work. This close creative content between composer, scriptwriter (scenario) and choreographer is imperative from the moment a new ballet is born".

But Diaghilev believed and introduced just this system of production—decades ago! In fact he took collaboration further by bringing together scenario writer, composer, scenist and decorator—and often the dancing principals.

The question comes back to this: is Soviet choreography compatable to the technical proficiency which we know the Soviet dancer possesses?

Judged on what we have seen from two visiting groups in London, on several films and—better—on Ulanova's complaints, I think the answer must be no. The choreographer seems not to have established his position in Soviet ballet. The directors and dancers have the greater responsibility, the choreographer merely being chosen after music, script and dancers are ready.

LACK

This might well explain the extraordinary incompatability between tremendous technique in single lifts, jumps and holds and lack of cohesive use of this technique in sustained choreography.

The choreographer, given a ballet "to do" on a plate, can only accomplish a few tricks to brand his trademark. If he has been shuttered from the originating discussions, how can he dovetail as part of the full creation? Obviously he cannot. Obviously again this seems to be the hindrance in Soviet choreographic working.

allet CARLOS CAPEL in LOS CLAVELES. Currently the company s touring in Spain.

discs

FROM PAGE SIX

Sonata in 1940 –just Hilda Gaunt and Constant Lambert at their pianos, and how excellent they were! Katin captures the romanticism of Liszt and in the Consolations there is a gentle serenity that never becomes cloying. The third is of course the Prologue of *Apparitions*, a ballet in which Helpmann is so difficult to replace. I hope you will get the same pleasure as I did. *Johann Strauss Waltzes and Polkas* Pittsburgh Symphony Orch. (Steinberg). Capitol CTL 7051.

These gay dances are as sparkling as the ballets they recall. Perpetuum Mobile for "The Contest" in Lichine's masterpiece *Graduation Ball*. Cranko's *Tritsch-Tratsch*, a pas de trois for two jolly Jack Tars and a girl—and what a girl! It was first performed in Cape Town before he joined the Wells Theatre Ballet. In another vein, Markova's dancing to the Acceleration Waltz for the ballet in *Die Fledermaus*, brought the house down at the Metropolitan, New York on New Year's Eve. Try it yourself.

Two Medium-Play Deccas, which will find their way to many ballet collections, are Les Patineurs (*LW* 5086) *and Spectre de la Rose and the pas de deux from Minkus' Don Quixote* (*LW* 5084). *The last of these brings to mind the verve, attack and command of Toumanova's and Skibine's performances at the Empress Hall.*

B.C.

S. A. Gorlinsky announces

MARKOVA

with MILORAD MISKOVITCH

In a Programme of Ballet

PROVINCIAL TOUR

			Apl.	
Leicester	**De Montfort Hall**	**Thurs**	**1**	**7.0**
Newcastle/Tyne	**City Hall**	**Sat**	**3**	**7.0**
Sheffield	**City Hall**	**Tues**	**6**	**7.0**
Wolverhampton	**Civic Hall**	**Thurs**	**8**	**7.30**
Swansea	**Brangwyn Hall**	**Sat**	**10**	**7.0**
Southampton	**Guildhall**	**Tues**	**13**	**7.30**

Thursday, April 15 **7.30**

ROYAL ALBERT HALL

with The Philharmonia Orchestra

Conductor - - ROBERT ZELLER

PROGRAMME INCLUDES

LES SYLPHIDES — BOLERO (1830)

NUTCRACKER SUITE — THE DYING SWAN

books

FROM PAGE SIX

could be seen in Ida's dressing-room, he whispered 'Delightful, from the bottom of my heart I tell you it's enchanting'—that is according to Argoutinski. The following day Igor rang me up to express his regret and his indignation at what we had seen . . ."

The final sentences bring everything very near. ". . . you can read this account to the company at supper. There is nothing exaggerated about it."

The 55 illustrations cover the three centuries and are interesting and unhackneyed—thank heavens I never saw *Le Pas D.Acier*!—but it seems a pity that they had to be lumped together in the middle, instead of running through an otherwise well-produced book.

The Book of Ballet. By James Audsley. (*Warne*, 5*s*.).

I fear young readers will find this book heavy-going. The illustrations in colour, line, and monochrome are pleasant, and the price is modest but too much has been crammed into the space available. The great land-marks in ballet are often lost beneath the rather dreary procession of facts, names and dates which is not helped by the pedestrian style.

There are some inaccuracies and mis-statements: *Giselle* is not the oldest ballet in existence or instance; while the use of the term "classic" for such ballets as *Igor*, *Carnaval*, and *Boutique*, still danced but no longer contemporary, is mis-leading and too easily confused with "classical" for the average young reader.

Also that: the story of *Swan Lake* is not of much importance but the premier danseur "has to take some trouble over the miming." Or that the *Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake* are rarely performed in their entirety, when both full-lengths are rarely out of the repertoire of three of the world's largest permanent companies. It is good to know that some great male dancers "have been glad to play Albrecht!"

Ballet. Pop-up Action Books, No. 4. By Violet La Mont. (*Publicity Products, Ltd.*, 5*s*.)

A class-room and scenes from several ballets spring suddenly to life as the pages of this ingenious little book are turned. The text is simple and informative, while the spirited drawings in full colour add to the attractions. It will delight the heart of any child of six to ten years of age.

P.C.

THE WELLS RETURN—IN SLEEPING BEAUTY

THE first night audience at Covent Garden gave a vociferous "welcome back" to the home company. To the disappointment of the company's American charieteers, the whole company not only was applauded but danced well enough to deserve the applause.

I waited for the manifestations of tiredness against which we had been warned—but none came. If anything the company was on better and more sustained form than usual. This applies especially to Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes both of whom excelled their already established standard.

BASIS

Mary Drage interested me, as the Lilac Fairy. Drage has a very sure line and firmness of leg which should be a safe basis upon which to mould the training for ballerina status. I thought her Lilac Fairy quite fine.

Rowena Jackson danced, with Brian Shaw, the Bluebird pas de deux. There is a lack of some final, projecting quality about Rowena Jackson s work which hinders her emergence as a composed dancer. In the Bluebird variations she danced well but I was annoyed by her arms, listlessly wrangling the air without purpose or motivation. Obviously she needs more thought and more coaching on her arm and hand use and a more dynamic polish to her work. The Bluebird also requires her to smile. Violette Verdy, also unhappy in the Bluebird with Babilee, at least made a stage picture by looking happily free. Jackson looks trapped by the role.

ADVICE

Much advice has been gratuitously given on the subject of the Bluebirds. I would merely give one basic hint: if you cannot achieve a theatrically realistic full-arm "fluttering," rather keep the arms still, held in a backwards curve. This broken wrist fluttering looks like a typist's fingers without a keyboard.

It will be interesting to see how Jackson develops.

● **Two Rene Maestri photographs of Festival Ballet at Monte Carlo. Above Moira Shearer and John Gilpin after Spectre de la Rose. Below, Louis Godfrey, Anita Landa and Anton Dolin in Petruchka. Review of the appearance : page ten.**

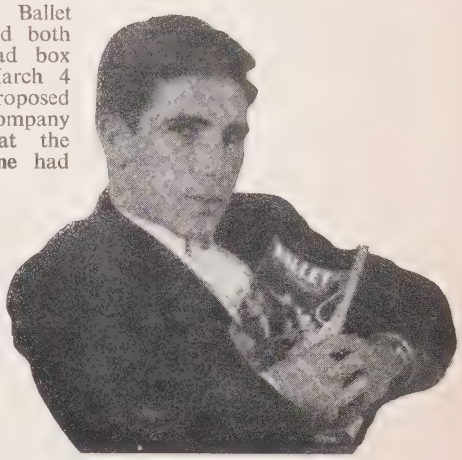
ballet digest

BALLET COMIQUE, who now open on the 26th of April at Liverpool, will be headed by **Irene Skorik** in place of **Sonia Arova** who has decided to return to Japan. **Stanley Williams,** the able Royal Danish Ballet dancer, has arrived as maitre de ballet and **Deryk Mendell** has come in from Paris to choreograph *Junior Clerk*. **Jack Carter** is to do *Shadows of the Past*, a humorous ballet, and another—using **Tchaikowski's** *Onegin* music is being planned. Apart from act two of *Lac*, the other ballets will be Peter Darrell s *Fountain* and *Le Cid* by de Lutry. Apart from Skorik and de Lutry, the company will also have **Xenia Palley, Domini Callaghan, Stanley Williams, Peter Darrell, Josephine Gordon, Herida May** and **Denys Palmer.** A male principal is to be announced. Ballets by **John Taras, Heinz Rozen** and **Eric Bruhn** are also planned.

ROLAND PETIT, off to a catastrophic start in New York (BALLET TODAY, March) added **Nora Kovach** and **Istvan Rabovsky** to the season to boost sales. They danced the *Quixote* pas de deux on the Petit programme, changing their Las Vegas opening to March so to fit in with Petit.

Petit, Ballet Theatre and Festival Ballet all want the Hungarian escapees as guest dancers this year. Meahwhile Petit has been offered a South American tour—but only if **Leslie Caron** stars. As Caron is on loan from MGM this is a remote possibility so the tour may fall through. **Hurok** manages both Petit and the Hungarians.

THE Los Angeles Ballet under **David Lichine** had both a bad press and a bad box office. In Paris on March 4 Lichine called off the proposed European tour. The company had been appearing at the Empire and **Oleg Tupine** had sustained a leg injury.



JUAN TENA WHOSE BALLET HAS FORMED IN BARCELONA

FESTIVAL BALLET'S tour of America opens in Quebec during October, under **Sol Hurok.** The contract, signed last month, guarantees the company over seven hundred thousand dollars and will run six months. This leaves the Festival Hall, the company's summer and Xmas home, vacant over Xmas this year. The speculation is : who will replace **Dolin's** company. The rumour is : "not for publication."

SADLER'S WELLS have announced the promotion to soloist rank of **Valerie Taylor** and **Anya Linden. Rowena Jackson,** of course, has been confirmed as ballerina.

THE Associated Arts School in Wimbledon, under director **Letty Littlewood,** have won the Barlow Trophy and N.A.T.D. award for highest aggregate marks in competition.

STRAWINSKI'S *Firebird* is to be recreated by Sadler's Wells, probably for the Edinburgh Festival in September. The opportunity of presenting a dance-stressed *Firebird* in answer to **Balachine's** pageant-overweight production is excellent. And to cast **Violetta Elvin** as the bird would be both good casting and provide a needed showcase for Elvin on her return to the company.

JEANMAIRE'S success in the United States (reported last month) was capped during March by her reception in New York. The musical, *Pink Tights*, was shortshrifted by the critics in their eagerness to praise the dancing, singing, acting **Jeanmaire.**

WE erred in adding the name of Festival Ballet's **Oleg Briansky** to the list of exported-to-Borovansky dancers. Briansky flew during March to San Paulo where he danced the *Quixote* grad pas de deux with **Jocelyn Vellmer** and created a role in the new **Ricarda** ballet presented during the San Paulo centenary commemoration celebrations. He returns to Festival Ballet during their Belfast appearance.

JANINE CHARRAT, one of the more exciting elements in current French dancing, brings her company to the Stoll Theatre for Peter Daubeny on April 6. Full reviews, photographs and profile in the May BALLET TODAY—on sale April 25.

THE NEW BALLET TO-DAY

JEAN TARGET

Every month this column will introduce new contributors and discuss coming changes and events in BALLET TODAY.

A VISITOR to BALLET TODAY's editorial menage during last month was Jean Target, the Parisian artist and sculptor. Target's work was introduced to readers last month by several sketches from the de Cuevas company.

In future Target's sketches will appear exclusively in BALLET TODAY and he will illustrate Ferdinand Reyna's column from Paris.

MOVEMENT

Target has a fine sense of projecting body movement and his sketches capture the balletic, rather than facial, content of a dancer. As a sculptor I have seen only his

head of Violette Verdy and a lifesize nude of a young girl which is beautifully proportioned. But, in going over several hundred sketches, I was intrigued by the wisped depiction of movement which is the invariable focus-point of Target's lightning sketches.

FIXTURES

So, in future, Jean Target will join A. Judah and June Ryan as permanent "fixtures" of BALLET TODAY. These three artists, each in an almost completely different way will be joined as occasion warrants by other artists. Recently *The Artist* announced our interest in young artists who find point of contact with ballet. We hope this will bring new artists into dance journalism and will publish suitably original work as we find it.

Ballet Diary

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

March 24 : *Lac Des Cygnes* (Nerina/Rassine)
25 : *Lac Des Cygnes* (Jackson/Field)
26 : *Sylphides, Homage, Patineurs* (Fonteyn)
27 : Mat. *Coppelia* (Lindsay/Doyle); Eve. *Lac, Daphnis and Chloe, Patineurs* (Fonteyn)
29 : *Cinderella* (Fonteyn/-Somes)
30 : *Cinderella* (Nerina/-Rassine)
31 : *Coppelia* (Lindsay/-Doyle)
April 1 : *Veneziana, Daphnis and Chloe, Homage* (Fonteyn)
2 : *Coppelia* (Dale/Shaw)
3 : Mat. *Lac* (Fonteyn/-Somes); Eve. *Lac* (Nerina/Rassine)
5 : *Lac* (Jackson/Field)
6 : *Cinderella* (Nerina/-Rassine)
7 : *Lac* (Fonteyn/Somes)
8 : *Coppelia* (Dale/Shaw)
9 : *Veneziana, Shadow, Job* (Beriosova/-Hart)
10 : Mat. *Shadow, Daphnis and Chloe, Veneziana* (Fonteyn); Eve. *Lac* (Nerina/Rassine)
12 : *Sylvia* (Fonteyn/-Somes)
13 : *Sylvia* (Nerina/-Rassine)
14 : *Sylvia* (Beriosova/-Chatfield)
15 : *Patineurs, Homage, Job* (Fonteyn)
16 : No Performance
17 : Mat. *Sylvia* (Beriosova/Chatfield); Eve. *Sylvia* (Nerina/-Rassine)

MARGARETHE SCHANNE AND KJELD NOAC IN GRADUATION BALL WITH THE ROYAL DANISH BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN. TRAVEL FACILITIES OF ESPECIAL INTEREST TO BALLET TODAY READERS ARE ANNOUNCED BY THE GARDINER TRAVEL SERVICE IN THIS ISSUE.

JANINE CHARRAT BALLET

April 6 : Season at Stoll Theatre by this recently formed French company

ANTONIO
at the Stoll Theatre

March 29 : This week has been added to Antonio's long season by definite public demand and the season (reviewed elsewhere in this issue) now finishes on April 3.

ALICIA MARKOVA WITH MILORAD MISKOVITCH

March 27 : Sophia Gardens Pavilion, Cardiff
March 30 : St. George's Hall, Bradford
April 1 : De Montfort Hall, Leicester
3 : City Hall, Newcastle
6 : City Hall, Sheffield
8 : Civic Hall, Wolverhampton
10 : Brangwyn Hall, Swansea
13 : Guildhall, Southampton
15 : Albert Hall, London (this with the Philharmonia Orchestra; provincial appearances with piano accompaniment).

BALLET COMIQUE

April 26: Liverpool Royal Court
May 3: Manchester Opera House
May 10: Leeds Grand
May 17: Edinburgh Kings
May 24: Glasgow Kings
May 31: Bristol Hippodrome
June 7: Oxford New
June 14: Newcastle Royal
June 28: Bournemouth Pavilion

for Roy Tobias as the Toy Soldier. The group dances for the adults and the children are confined to an almost formalistic gavotte because of a stage too cluttered to move on.

Scene II : The battle between the Nutcracker and the Mouse King offers more life and concerted action as well as the first of the amazing transformations : the growing of the Christmas tree. This is really miraculous considering the miserable little City Centre stage with its barely twenty-foot grid.

Scene III : The White Forest and the Snowflake Waltz is preceeded by the second of the breathtaking transformations : the disappearance of the Christmas tree and the emergence of the White Forest, during which time the sleeping girl (in her crib, which literally seems to float along), is on stage throughout the entire transformation. The Snowflake Waltz which follows is pretty but choreographically not exciting.

With Act II (The Kingdom of the Sugar Plum Fairy) :

Balanchine's "Nutcracker"

From page 8

Scene I : The Entrance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, the ballet begins to take on new life. Paul Nickel, the Little Prince (Nutcracker), does an admirable job of the classic pantomime given to him in which he explains to the Sugar Plum Fairy the adventures of his companion and himself before their arrival in the Land of Sweets. However, with the opening divertissements in this act, the ballet awakes. By far the high spot of the evening is the Grand Pas de Deux of the Sugar Plum Fairy and Her Cavalier, danced by Maria Tallchief and Nicholas Magallanes (substituting for injured André Eglevsky). The adagio is particularly brilliant and danced to its very zenith by Tallchief whose speed, strength and precision are indeed breathtaking. There are tricks aplenty for the ballet goer who likes to see the phenomenal from his ballerina. Tallchief's variation is also dazzling, however, the variation for her cavalier does not quite come off. It is here that Eglevsky is most missed for his presence would have sustained the choreographic climax. Magallanes does a very noble job of support, however.

Of the other divertissements the Waltz of the Candy Flowers led by Tanaquil LeClercq is the most interesting choreographically and perhaps the strongest structurally. LeClercq does a fine job and there appears in her dancing a new found balance between upper and lower parts of the body. Also, a new cleaness in the point work and most certainly a new assurance we have not seen before.

Costumes by Karinska are stunning, but it is the lighting of Jean Rosenthal, the transformations of Horace Armistead, and the wonderful Tchaikowski music which offer an evening's pleasure in the *Nutcracker*. As for Balanchine, his work has barely begun, for the *Nutcracker* at this stage is still a spectacle with the accent removed from its dancing. I'm sure that Balanchine will restore the necessary balance.

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IL CIGNO

ITALY'S DANCE MAGAZINE

EDITOR
UGO DEL' ARA

Il Cigno
32 Via Durini
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Ballet Tomorrow Recaps on

MARYON LANE

THIS month rather than continue over the Easter vacation our survey of Ballet Schools, I decided to trace the career of one of the foremost of the ballerinas with the young Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet Company, depicting the many different and varied stages of her career, from the days of earliest childhood to the ballerina of today.

I decided therefore to call on Maryon Lane, who like so many of our present day dancers is a South African, in fact she was born in Melmoth, a small town hidden discreetly in Zululand in the midst of the wilds of nowhere.

At the tender age of three and a half she attended her first dancing class in Johannesburg, with Pauline Stokes, later with Face de Villiers and Reina Berman. In 1946 though, she decided to come to England, her decision was no doubt doubly endorsed by the fact that she had just recently been awarded the Adeline Genee cup by the Royal Academy of Dancing, for the most promising overseas student, incidentally at the same time a scholarship was given to Gilbert Vernon, another South African, who is now also dancing leading classical roles with the same company.

ACCENTED

In England Maryon was immediately accepted into the Sadlers Wells School, where she remained for the final year of her training ; whilst a student she had passed all her R.A.D. examinations with high honours, so take note all those ballet students who apply beseechingly to us to give them an excuse for avoiding them.

In 1947 she was taken into the newly formed Theatre Ballet Company, where she played her first professional roles ; her first was as one of the Dancers in *Carnival*, and in the *Pas de Trois* from *Lac des Cygnes*, her first solo role was that delightful little cameo the " Polka " in *Facade*. Amusingly enough although she still dances the " Polka " in *Facade*, she now dances the role of Odette in *Lac de Cygnes*.

Since being with the company she has toured Holland, Belgium, Germany and travelled from coast to coast across America, dancing in all the large cities, besides taking part in numerous tours round Great Britain : soon she will be packing her trunks again for she will be off to her native South Africa, where the company will be visiting her home town of Johannesburg for seven weeks, needless to say it is a tour to which she is avidly looking forward.

PREFERENCE

Maryon has always had a preference for dramatic ballets, in fact her favourite role in a modern work is as the Bride in Alfred Rodrigue's *Blood Wedding;* this work with its underlying tone of sultry and dramatic tension, gives her full scope to reveal her many acting capabilities, a work, which in her own words she finds " so refreshing and different."

One of her many ambitions is to dance the role of Columbine in Cranko's *Harlequin in April*, also to dance the Bride in *La Fete Etrange* ; although both these works are in the company's current repertoire, she has never had the opportunity of dancing these roles. Another strange factor is that all the time she has been with the company she has only once had the chance of creating a role ; that of the leading part in a ballet entitled *Parures* designed for her by Anthony Burke.

In April this will have been rectified, for, Kenneth Macmillan's *Somnambulism* to music by Stan Kenton will have been seen on television. She will also be seen in London in the autumn in another new Macmillan work *Laiderette*, which is to be brought into the company's repertoire ; a work she loves with its mysterious air of pathos and sadness.

Only recently Maryon has been filming with fellow South African David Poole in the dance sequences of *Dance Little Lady*, where she has been " standing in " or rather " dancing in " for Mai Zetterling : as a medium for ballet the cinema screen is one of her favourites, preferably if it is a film dedicated to show off ballet to its best ability and not merely " used " to prolong a series of subsidiary sequences, as it so often is these days.

FUTURE

Although Maryon Lane is only twenty three years old, she now bears on her youthful shoulders our expectations for an interesting dance future, imparting to her roles that spritely sense of humour so admirably portrayed in *Pineapple Poll*, with her own tender charm : her formula for success is having her heart and soul in her work, a work that consists of ballet, ballet, ballet and more ballet.

—NICHOLAS VALENTINE

The Leningrad School of Ballet — FROM PAGE 12

Gennady Ledyakh. The Festival also awarded prizes to a large group of pupils from the school's graduation class.

The school trains dancers not only for the Kirov Theatre of Opera and Ballet in Leningrad. In 1936 the school was the first one in the Soviet Union to open a number of departments giving training to future dancers for the ballet theatres of non-Russian Soviet Republics. There are now departments in which children from Moldavia, Tajikistan, Kirghizia, Buryat-Mongolia, Bash ghizia, Buryat-Mongolia, Bashkiria and North Ossetia are studying. They are trained under famous Russian ballet teachers, and return home accomplished dancers.

DEMONSTRATIONS

The School arranges for regular demonstration concerts by its pupils at Leningrad workers' clubs and Palaces of Culture, and also sends them to perform in Moscow. The teacher is always present at the concerts and the audience is given a demonstration of teaching methods in classical and character dancing. The stage is converted into a classroom, and the art of teaching the fundamentals of dancing from the first class upwards is shown. Audiences follow with interest the way in which with years of study exercises become smooth and polished, and how dances acquire expressiveness as technique is perfected.

Part of the training at the school includes performing in the ballets staged at the Kirov Theatre.

Another of the school's great contributions to ballet training is its work in producing textbooks on classical, character and folk dancing, the classical lifts, and so on.

The present head of the school is the fine ballerina Tatyana Vecheslova. She combines magnificent dancing technique with outstanding acting gifts. Her dancing, vigorous and expressive, is characterised by a subtle interpretation of the roles she performs.

Vecheslova and the other teachers at the school are giving all of their knowledge and rich stage experience to training young talent. It is because the traditions of the Russian classical ballet are being continued and the oustanding older ballet dancers are passing on their knowledge to the youth that the Soviet ballet enjoys success and is steadily growing.

In 1953, twenty-seven young ballet dancers graduated from the Leningrad School of Ballet. Ten of them have joined the company of the Kirov Theatre, while the rest will dance at theatres in Minsk, Baku, Saratov, Sverdlovsk and a number of other cities in the country.

ON THE COVER — Valerie Taylor

VALERIE TAYLOR, the young Sadler's Wells dancer was born in London twenty years ago.

At the age of three and a half, accompanied by her elder sister she was secretly taken to have ballet classes; later she trained at the Phyllis Bedells School and at The Royal Academy of Dancing, finally attending for a year and a half at the Sadler's Wells School, where she became the school's first "head girl".

FAVOURITE

On the completion of her training she was at once taken into the Sadler's Wells Company, where she made her first appearance in Liverpool, dancing the role of "The Fairy of the Woodland Glades", in the *Sleeping Beauty* which, incidentally, still remains her favourite role.

Since 1948, when she joined the company, she has already been on three American tours, and one of Germany, Italy and Portugal.

To page 23

AGENTS IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD

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The Real Danilova

On ballet, and herself

DANILOVA discussed her schooling . . . how her aunt decided to send her to the Imperial Theatre School, how she was among the eight candidates admitted, how she nearly flunked out . . . .

Internes wore long blue dresses, white pelegrines, black aprons, little hats made of straw, feathers, wool, depending on the season.

Children living at home wore shorter brown dresses. They were well-disciplined . . . always had matrons on guard. Weren't allowed to mix with older students. Her first appearance on a stage was in the opera, *Faust*. She was so frightened she had to be dragged along. In the opera Mephistopheles "drinks" some liquid and Choura, thinking it was a real drink finished a whole glassfull . . .actually it was water with paint in it.

Her next appearance was as a Shepherdess in *Le Pavilion D'Armide*. Actually she was only on the stage for a short moment, sort of a walk-on part, but she told her uncle she had a solo. Afterwards she asked him if he had seen her and he admitted that he hadn't. As it turned out, just as she came onstage he sneezed and by the time he had taken out his handkerchief and blown his nose she was already off the stage. Each student (senior) had a ballet choreographed for her. Fokine first did *Sylphides* for a school production and Balanchine did his first choreography for the school. She still believes that the Russian school is the best and every great ballerina today is the product of a Russian teacher. (However, she feels that the style in Soviet Russia is becoming very acrobatic.)

LEAVING RUSSIA

When she left Russia with Balanchine, Tamara Geva, Nicholas Efimov, they went to Germany where she suddenly became style-conscious.

She thinks they must have looked very peculiar to the German people. The men had never used wigs so they let their hair grow long. She saw a veil which was used to decorate a stand in a hat shop window, bought it and walked about the streets with it over her head. She told her friends she was a success because people were looking at her. (Forgot to mention that during the Russian Revolution the students were so hungry they would try to content themselves by reading stories about food. She even had to eat fish that sometimes had worms in it.)

In Germany they danced in a music hall and she was always late and refused to hurry since she was from the great Maryinski Theatre and the rest of the performers could just wait. When they met Diaghilev she didn't think it was necessary to audition for him since she was from the Maryinski and therefore must be good.

A BRIEF DIGEST OF A RECENT LECTURE

Diaghilev always watched performances from the audience and was extremely critical of his dancers, especially those he considered the most talented.

RESPONSIBLE

In her opinion he was not responsible for Nijinsky's madness as some people have implied. She thinks mental illness runs in the family and it was caused by the alcoholism of the parents. She thinks full-length ballets are a bore and even Diaghilev said that only Act II of *Swan Lake* was worthwhile.

She talked about her association with the De Basil Co. and how on opening night in New York she lost her wig in *Beau Danube;* how they had quarrels and reorganized.

When she was asked what she would consider to be an ideal programme of ballets she gave the following :

1. *Concurrence* or *Cotillion,*
2. *Symphonie Fantastique* or *Seventh Symphony,*
3. *Beau Danube* or *Gaite Parisienne.*

She loves American audiences and feels that they're hungry for dance. She enjoys dancing in the smaller cities and towns because America is not just the large cities and most of our greatest people come from small towns. She thinks that American dancers are too mechanical and their technique is limited. They should study other phases of dance, art, music, etc., and not restrict themselves to their own ballet studio.

PERFORMANCE

You should see good performances to know what should be done and see bad performances to know what should not be done. She believes that we should have state-subsidized ballet, drama, music companies.

You pay an extra cent tax for perfume so why not pay an extra cent to support a state cultural organization ? If a company has to depend on the support of the public they can't try anything that wouldn't be popular with the audience. Most of the great composers weren't recognized until years after their deaths but if they had thought only of pleasing their contemporaries we might never have had some of the newer types of music."

Danilova touched briefly on her Japanese tour.

The Japanese adored the company . . . met them at the plane and showered them with flowers. Then they were driven through the streets in a motorcade. She told a friend that she felt like General MacArthur. She came home with three times more luggage than she had started out with and Frederick Franklin received so many gifts he had to move out of his one room appartment !

Finally, she asked if anyone could name an Italian ballerina who was very great and someone mentioned Legnani. She said, "Oh, but she was a ballerina before you and I were even in project ! I mean someone more recent ! "

CONTINENTAL PROFILE

NATASCHA TROFIMOVA

RUSSIAN born, a pupil of Edouardova, Sabine Ress and Tatjana Gsovsky in Berlin, after the war, Natascha Trofimova was prima ballerina at the State Opera Berlin with the choreopgrapher Tatjana Gsovsky.

She danced the leading roles in Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Petrushka, Prokoffiev's Romeo and Juliet and La Boutique. Her partner was Gert Reinholm.

Later she danced the Bellastriga in Egks Abraxas, choreography : Helge Pawlinin, ensemble : Ballet Theatre Company. (Germany Tournee.)

Guest ballerina at the State Opera Hamburg as Ophelia in Hamlet by B. Blacher, choreography Helga Swedlund.

Then she was engaged by Victor Gsovsky in Munich and replaced Irene Skorik as prima ballerina at the State Opera.

Now she has danced the title role in Salome, music by Florent Schmidt, choreography by Pia and Pino Mlakar on the 3rd of February in Munich.

Her name stands above all German ballerinas !

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MARTHA GRAHAM SEASON

NOW, before your letters come pouring in to say that I am biased against Martha Graham, let me make my position regarding Graham clear. I will admit I entered the Saville theatre biased—heavily biased.

But I was biased in favour of Graham—whom I had not previously seen.

Proof ? I spoke of her coming season as " one of the most important events of the ballet year." I wrote in at least three of my regular columns that I " looked forward to Graham's season with great interest." Only two days before her opening I broadcast a script, the last words of which were " with this, and the Martha Graham arrival next week London is having a season of high standard."

Martha Graham in Letter to the World.

So my bias is clear. For years I had read and heard of this " Picasso of the dance " . . . this over-fifty-year-old with immense talent and expression . . . this innovator.

Right away I will make a second admission : I was sadly, sadly disappointed.

UNHAPPY

Martha Graham presented three dance works. In two of them she measured her neck for a rope. And the third one was unhappy. I am well prepared to take misery, human suffering, depression and all its attenae in the theatre. But I will not accept this perverted cul-de-sac of suicide for suicide's sake which seems the principal content of so much modern dance. Martha Graham presented amateur modern dance as we had seen it—but in a highly professional guise. Excellent scores, good lighting, interesting if dated decor and a faultless technical standard of dancing.

But the limitations of this technique are too obvious. But more important is the theme value. Human beings exist under so many varied coercisions that fears are inevitable. We are open to these fears and we either take precaution against them or use one of several methods of defeating them when they manifest. Only the neurotic amongst us looks to a nail in the wall and ten yards of rope as his cure-all.

If a dance form finds itself perennially introverting to a variant of suicidal existentialism : too bad. But I cannot bring myself to praise its coming in the theatre.

MISERY

I have been asked before " Why should we not present misery ? " But of course, why not ? It is not that I object to. What I loathe is the reaction to misery exemplified by these dancers.

I often wonder what they would do if they were critics whose editors handed them " readers' letters " to study. I doubt if there would be enough rope in creation for them, then !

Perhaps one should welcome any dancer who can attract an audience. Just as London clergymen welcomed Dr. Billy Graham as they thought of their empty churches. But *Copelia* had the Opera House sold right out the following night so I lacked the needy incentive.

The dance items presented will be reviewed in detail in May.

Late News

The Petit company has disbanded and Petit has gone to Hollywood to choreograph The Glass Slipper *for Caron . . . The Los Angeles Ballet has disbanded after a chaotic opening in Paris . . . it now seems likely that a contingent from the Moscow—not the Leningrad—Ballet will come to Paris . . . LeClerq, after an operation, is out of N.Y. City Ballet for some time . . . Tallchief is also out—on tour with the new Denham Ballet Russe . . . a rumour is that Violette Verdy may join Balanchine . . . after all, Hightower will not be leaving the de Cuevas company . . . The Markova tour was almost sold-out before it began, she had a wonderful house, and reception, on opening night at Bristol.*

COPPELIA

—From Page 5

and Blair was slightly below par but not enought to spoil otherwise fine dancing.

Whether *Coppelia* is worth the attention lavished upon it in this production may be open to doubt. But, in reviewing, let me accept the accomplished fact rather than criticize what was not done. If *Coppelia* had to be revived, and de Valois has a pretty sure gauge on her market, I doubt if a better production could have been made.

If I had been allowed to choose just one portion of the new production with which to wrestle myself, I would have chosen the *corps* work and put into practice my constantly reiterated ideas on dynamic group dancing. Whenever I see *corps* work on folk-based material I remember the ovation given here to the *corps de ballet* of the Royal Danish Ballet. That ovation could be ours—and I feel Maestro Cecchetti would not have disapproved.

SECOND

At the second performance Swanhilda was danced by Avril Navarre and Franz by Alexander Grant.

Grant, I feel, could become a very lively male dancer but he must learn to travel and to come easier into the air. But Avril Navarre presented a rather sorry spectacle.

Nothing worries me more, as a critic, than damning a young dancer. But criticism in ballet is so pastel-tinted that faint praise is never read between the lines. So let me be blunt : the pas de deux (act three) as danced by Navarre and Grant was the worst pas de deux I have ever seen on a major stage. It was attrociously bad and whoever passed its performance at dress rehearsal has a case to answer.

Navarre's variations were not bad, quite far from it. But this pas de deux is the principal hinge of the final act and it makes or mars the Swanhilda. This time it marred.

Anya Linden (Aurora) and Greta Hamby (Prayer) were quite effective but, if anything, the *corps* work was even less enervated than on the first night.

IDENTICAL

What does this *corps* work consist of ? Supposedly, in the first act, it is a theatricized version of various folk dances. But the two dances, the csardas and mazurka, are virtually identical. One became almost a stately, treaded morris dance ! A vocabulary of tiny dimensions may be sufficient for a pseudo-folk dance —singular. But two such dances built upon the same vocabulary rather spoilt the trick. Even Houdini never escaped from the same irons twice in one show. And he was far less limited.

Here the csardas and mazurka looked similar, and both were completely lacking in accent. The music had as much beat as Covent Garden's orchestra can contrive, the " folk dancers " missed even this. Rarely did any dancer finish on the beat—this including Farron and Navarre. Linden managed to keep rhythm, but her solo is, of course, not in folk element.

We also had a waltz danced out of 3/4 tempo and a general drag to the act three group dances which should have sent Franz back to sleep. The first night *corps* work was bad enough, if two evenings can make it still worse . . . what of it in a month hence, or a year ?

It is a sad pity that a production which is a definite improvement over its predecessor (and let me say clearly that it is) should fall short of a final accomplishment because of such easily corrected flaws.

THE CRITICS AND THEIR CLICHES

" —he kept too much ahead of the music " **by Judah**

Roland Petit

By Peter Craig-Raymond

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FROM PAGE ELEVEN

Carmargo Society with spells in revue and variety.

1931 created role of Satan in Carmargo Society production of *Masque Job* with de Valois choreography.

1935 founded Markova-Dolin Ballet of which he became director, before dissolution in 1938.

1940 appointed regisseur of classic wing of Ballet Theatre New York.

1941 choreographed *The Pas De Quatre* for Ballet Theatre.

1942-45 danced in America with Ballet Theatre with Markova.

1946 joined Marquis de Cuevas Ballet Russe in New York.

1948 new Markova-Dolin Ballet touring Central America, Mexico and U.S.A.

1948 Summer returned to England as guest artist at Covent Garden.

1949 five arena perfomances with Markova supported by Cone-Ripman pupils at Empress Hall followed by tours of British provinces with Markova.

1950 he engaged soloists acquired decor etc. and formed company known as Festival Ballet with Dolin as artistic director—company played October to January at Stoll Theatre.

1952 March broke partnership with Markova who left Festival.

1953 during recess of Festival late September and October, went on tour of India with Gilpin and Svetlova.

November 1953 published book biography of Markova, has also written text book on art of partnering.

Vladmir Doukoudovsky. Born Monte Carlo of Russian parents. At 12 went to Preobrajenska School where he remained for seven years.

1935 won first prize at the International Dance competition for children.

1937 toured with the Ballet of Bronislava Nijinska.

1938 danced with the Ballet of Monte Carlo.

1938 became a member of Ballet Theatre in New York.

1941 joined Original Ballet Russe dancing *Prince Igor*, *Paganini*, Bluebird in *Aurora's Wedding*, Prince in *Swan Lake* and *Carnival.*

1947 apeared at Covent Garden with Original Ballet Russe.

1951 joined Kirsta's Revived Ballet Russe at Festival Hall and at Adelphi Theatre before company dissolved. Now in Australia. Married to Nina Stroganova.

Katherine Dunham. Born in 1914, Dunham has become the most famous of Negro dancers, heading the Dunham company which has toured theatres and cafes for many years. She runs a New York school from which she recruits her dancers, has filmed, televised and written a great deal about Negro and anthropopgical dance in general.

CLASSIFIEDS

VILLA REQUIRED, South of France, two weeks beginning August, or would exchange furnished flat Surbiton. Box MH 305.

THE MUSCOVITE PEACOCK. A Study of Leon Bakst's Art. By Raymond Lister. Illustrated. Limited Edition. £2 2s. Prospectus from Golden Head Press. Mortlocks. Medreth. Royston.

Copies of pre-1950 **BALLET TODAY, DANCE INDEX, DANCE, BALLET,** etc. required. State price, condition. Box PO 345.

Copies of the first enlarged issue of **BALLET TODAY**—March—are not available now but most back issues can be supplied at 1/-, plus 3d. postage. 15, Upper Brighton Road, Surbiton, Surrey.

Books on the dance bought, state condition and price to Box PO 345 (see advert above for old magazine issues).

Classified advertisements should be sent to J. Stonebanks, 33, Crawford Place, W.1. Or telephone PADdington 2038.

Jacqueline Livingstone, a young South African dancer who is showing great promise in London at the moment.

Letters

Provincial Ballet

Through the medium of your columns I would like to thank all the ballet enthusiasts who have shown their interest in the proposed formation of a small company in Birmingham, mentioned in my letter which you kindly printed in your February issue, by writing to me. Especially would I thank those who have made offers of help. These letters have been most encouraging.

The formation of the type of company which I have in mind is obviously going to be uphill work and the results of out labours will not be noticeable for a few months yet. I feel, however, that the project warrants the amount of work required to make it a success.

F. E. Purslow.
100, Springfield Road,
Kings Heath, Birmingham, 14.

I am interested in hearing much more of schemes for starting provincial ballet. The next issue will have a feature on Scottish developments and meanwhile I should like to hear from interested readers. Editor.

Congratulations

I would like to congratulate you on the enlarged BALLET TODAY which is still another step forward for a near perfect magazine. Here are my best wishes for the future of BALLET TODAY.

J. Cookson (Mrs.).
46, Dodgson Road, Preston.

"Wonderful"

I do want to mention that I find each issue of your magazine better and better. It has fast become the best dance publication of all.

Thanking you and looking forward to the next, fact-filled issue of BALLET TODAY.

Robert Tynes.
Box 1945, Richmond,
Virginia, U.S.A.

THE repertoire for the provincial recital tour by **Alicia Markova** and **Milorad Miskovitch** will include *The Dying Swan*, variations from *Casse Noisette*, Ricarda's *Bolero* 1830, variations from *Sylphides* and *L'Apri Midi d'Faune*, danced by Markova for the first time.

SUJATA, the female partner in America's well-known Sujata and **Asoka** oriental dance team, appears alone for the first time in *King of the Khyber Rifles* for 20th-Fox.

ALEXANDER VON SWAINE and **Lisa Czobel** will be appearing at the Contemporary Dance Theatre on April 5. Czobel has danced with **Jooss,** Hamburg State Opera ballet and, since 1948, has been dancing in Germany and elsewhere with Von Swaine. They have just now returned from an Asian tour. Von Swaine himself was born in Munich, trained in Potsdam and Berlin before dancing with **Reinhardt,** in Berlin, Milan at the Scala and touring as a soloist before joining Lisa Czobel.

OWING to the L.C.C. withholding permission, the **Hilde Holger** Modern Dance programme—announced last month—has been postponed. The new date is May 1. Three other new pieces, *Aztec Cult*, *Rhythm of the East* and *Tibet* are to be presented.

THE Celtic Ballet of Scotland is to give a gala performance on April 5 at Glasgow's St. Andrew's Hall. This is the company which is going to the United States in July and it is headed by **Margaret Morris, Bruce McClure, Michael Ronni, Rena Steel, Elizabeth Maclean** and **Gorden Aitken.**

APART from *Esmerelda* which, as already announced, **Nicholas Beriosoff** will recreate in four acts for Festival Ballet in Barcelona next month, the company is also to do a digested version of *Napoli*. **Harold Lander,** rapidly becoming a Massine-like salesman of his works, is putting together a one act version of the fine Danish ballet by **Bournonville.** Festival have also announced that, during their American tour, **Kovach** and **Rabovsky** will join the company as guest artists.

LESLIE CARON will marry **Mike Midlin,** a publicist, later this year. She is being divorced from her first husband, a meat-heir, now.

MOIRA SHEARER began work last month at Shepperton Studios, in London Films', *The Man Who Loved Redheads*. In the film, Moira Shearer plays not one but four parts : Daphne, Colette, Sylvia and Olga. Screenplay is by **Terence Rattigan** and portrays a man's search for an "ideal woman." Only one of her parts allows Shearer to dance : that of Olga, "a famous ballerina." **Moyra Fraser** is also in the film.

Ballet Digest

JOHN CRANKO is to join the **Borovansky** Ballet to recreate *Bonne-Bouche* and *Pineapple Poll* for that company. This lust for revivals in the Borovansky repertoire might be dispelled if Cranko can serve as a stimulant to younger choreographers there.

Valerie Taylor—*from page* 17.

She has danced a large number of roles, having appeared in almost every ballet in the company's repertoire, including *Sylvia*, *Les Patineurs*, *Daphnis and Chloe*, *Bonne Bouche*, *Donald of the Burthens*, **and in the new production of** *Coppelia.*

LATER

Later in the season she will be seen in the "Pas de Trois". from *Le Lac des Cygnes*, **dancing with Anya Linden and David Blair.**

In all the ballets she has appeared her favourite is perhaps *Dante Sonata*, **but one of her many ambitions is to one day dance in Ninette de Valois'** *Rakes Progress*, **playing the role of the Betrayed Girl.**

N.V.

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